



PRESS RELEASE

USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63)
Public Affairs Office
FPO AP 96634-2770

E-mail: pao@kitty-hawk.navy.mil
Web: www.kittyhawk.navy.mil



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KH Strike Group concludes successful summer underway period

By Mass Communications Specialist Seaman Matthew Reinhardt, Kitty Hawk public affairs

USS KITTY HAWK, At Sea -- USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) will return to Yokosuka, Japan, Sept. 15, ending a three-month summer at sea period.

The ship departed June 8 and took part in Exercise Valiant Shield 2006, a multi-service war game involving three carrier strike groups, 22,000 personnel, and 280 aircraft June 19 to 23. It was the largest military exercise conducted by the United States in Pacific waters since the Vietnam War.

"Kitty Hawk and the entire battle force have again completed an important theater security cooperation deployment," said Rear Adm. Doug McClain, Carrier Strike Group 5 commander. "We have engaged and exercised with friends and allies as well as combining our U.S. forces in the largest joint exercise that anyone can remember with Valiant Shield."

Kitty Hawk pulled into Otaru, Japan, on Hokkaido Island from July 1 to 5 after Valiant Shield.

The carrier hit three more ports during the 99-day deployment: Singapore; Fremantle, Australia; and Laem Chabang, Thailand.

"Australia was a lot of fun. There were interesting sights, everyone was nice, very friendly, and the atmosphere was pleasant," said Culinary Specialist Seaman Charles Hill, a berthing cleaner with supply department's S-11 division. "It was so relaxed and the shopping was fantastic."

The Afloat Training Group observed Sailors for the Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA) during this cruise. During TSTA, Sailors were graded on their performance during: mass casualty, general quarters, and main space fire drills.

Dozens of distinguished visitors boarded the carrier during this underway period for tours. Visitors included U.S. ambassador to Thailand, the Royal Thai army commander in chief, and various officials from Indonesia, Australia, Singapore, and Japan.

Sailors will finally be able to see their loved ones, spouses, and for a few, their newborn children.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuels) (AW) Joseph Garrido's, wife, gave birth to their second child, June 29.

"I just want to be able to help [my wife] with whatever she needs," said Garrido, the V-4 flight deck leading petty officer. "I don't think anyone will beat me off the brow. I want to get to my son as soon as I can."

The Kitty Hawk Strike Group is the largest carrier strike group in the Navy. It includes the Kitty Hawk, the aircraft squadrons and staff of Carrier Air Wing 5, the guided-missile cruisers USS Chancellorsville (CG 62) and USS Cowpens (CG 63), and Destroyer Squadron 15 staff. The group's ships and destroyer squadron staff are based at Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, and the air wing and staff are based at Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan.

To find more news about the Kitty Hawk Strike Group, visit the Navy NewsStand at www.news.navy.mil/local/cv63/.

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